DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 481 775 JC 030 565

TITLE	Satisfaction and Characteristics of Graduating Students, Classes of 2002 and 2003.
INSTITUTION	Mendocino Coll., Ukiah, CA.
PUB DATE	2003-07-00
NOTE	9p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	College Graduates; Community Colleges; *Graduates; Graduation; Individual Characteristics; Satisfaction; *Student Characteristics; Two Year Colleges; User Satisfaction (Information)
IDENTIFIERS	*Mendocino College CA

ABSTRACT

This document discusses the characteristics and satisfaction level of graduating students in 2002-03 in Mendocino College. The graduating class of 2003 was the largest in the college's history. The information gathered in the report came from a survey mailed to graduates from the class of 2002 and 2003. The response rate was 35% for class of 2002 and 21% for class of 2003. Some of the key findings of the survey are as follows: (1) for both graduating classes, the majority of students completed their program in two or three years; (2) in comparison to the class of 2002, less students from 2003 planned to transfer to a four year school upon graduation; (3) more students from 2003 planned to begin/continue working upon graduation; (4) students from both years were satisfied with most of the services and program offered by the college; (5) overall for both years, the majority (78%) of students were White; (6) more students from 2002 worked full-time (64%) during college than 2003 students (59%); (7) the majority of students from both years took classes both during the day and night; and (8) the most common area of study was General Studies and Liberal Arts (57%). Contains 2 tables and 10 graphs. (MZ)

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Satisfaction and Characteristics of Graduating Students

Classes of 2002 and 2003

ED 481 775

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Mendocino College

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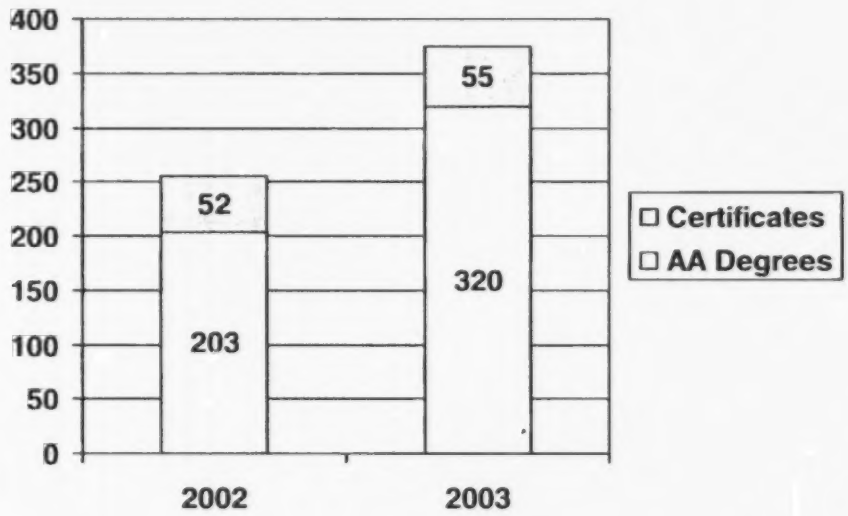
What do graduating students think of their new alma mater? How satisfied are these students with the educational experience that they have just completed? The opinions of these successful students are a powerful resource, prompting reflection and further improvement. This document presents a picture of what two recent cohorts of graduating students thought of Mendocino College and the services it provided.

The class of 2002 had 255 graduates (52 received certificates and 203 received Associate's degrees). At 375, the class of 2003 was Mendocino College's largest group of graduates yet. According to reports from the Admissions and Records Office, 55 certificates and 320 received Associate's degrees were awarded.

Figure 1. Degrees and Certificates: 2002 and 2003



There was a dramatic increase (46%) in graduates from 2002 to 2003. This increase outpaces the steady growth in the number of students attending Mendocino College for the past eight years (around 3% per year, on average). One reason there were more graduates in 2003 was an initiative to encourage eligible students who had not yet completed the requisite paperwork to officially graduate. For instance, the larger class of 2003 included more long-term students (5+ years) than did the class of 2002: 22% versus 15%, respectively (see Figure 2). Thus in 2003, the college saw the graduation of more backlogged students.

The graduating student survey was mailed to all graduates in 2002 and 2003 shortly before the spring graduation ceremony; 89 graduates from the class of 2002 responded (35 %) and 78 graduates from the class of 2003 responded (21%). The response rates for each year, though quite different, are within the normal range for a single-mailing survey. The size of each sample is adequate to allow for confident conclusions about the whole group.

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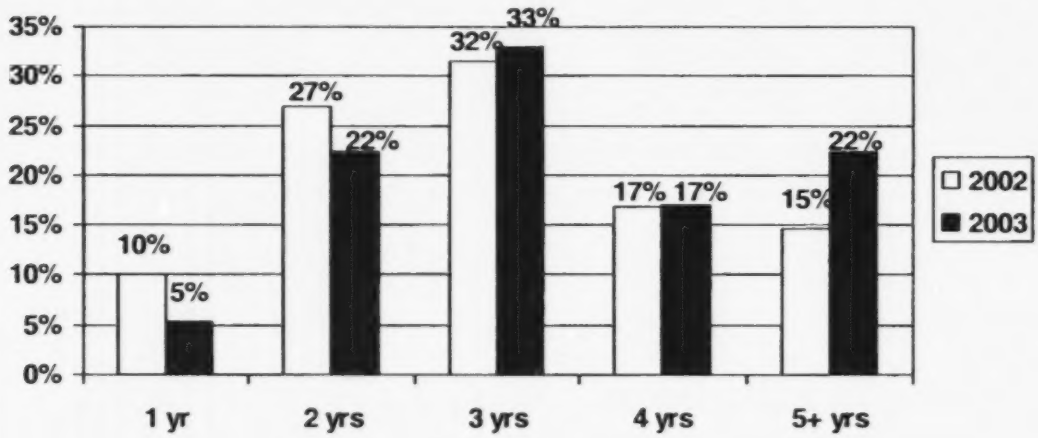
Time to Completion

The majority of students completed their program in two to three years. Although the time to completion is similar for both cohorts of graduates, the class of 2003 had more long-term students and also had fewer graduates in the "1 year" category.

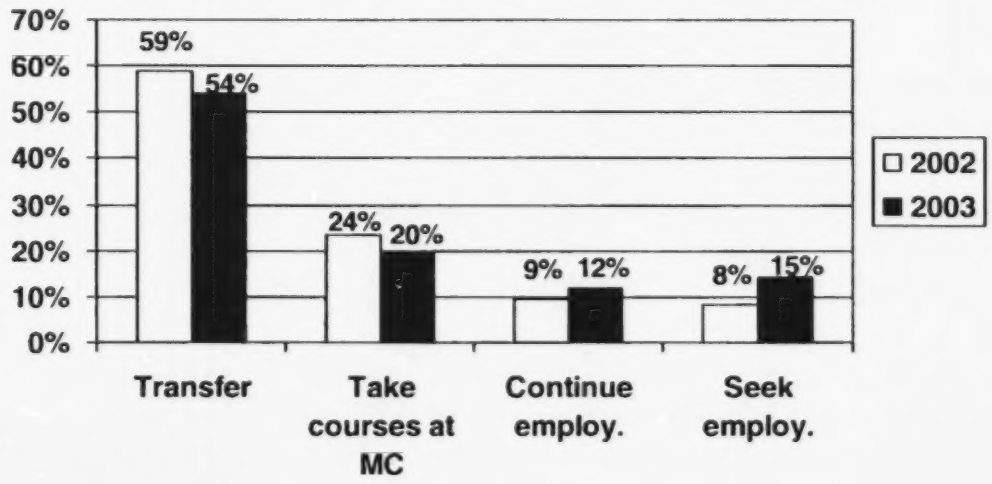
Figure 2. Years to Graduation: Classes of 2002 and 2003



Plans after Graduation

Compared to 2002, the class of 2003 had fewer students who were planning to transfer and more students who were planning to continue to work or to seek new employment.

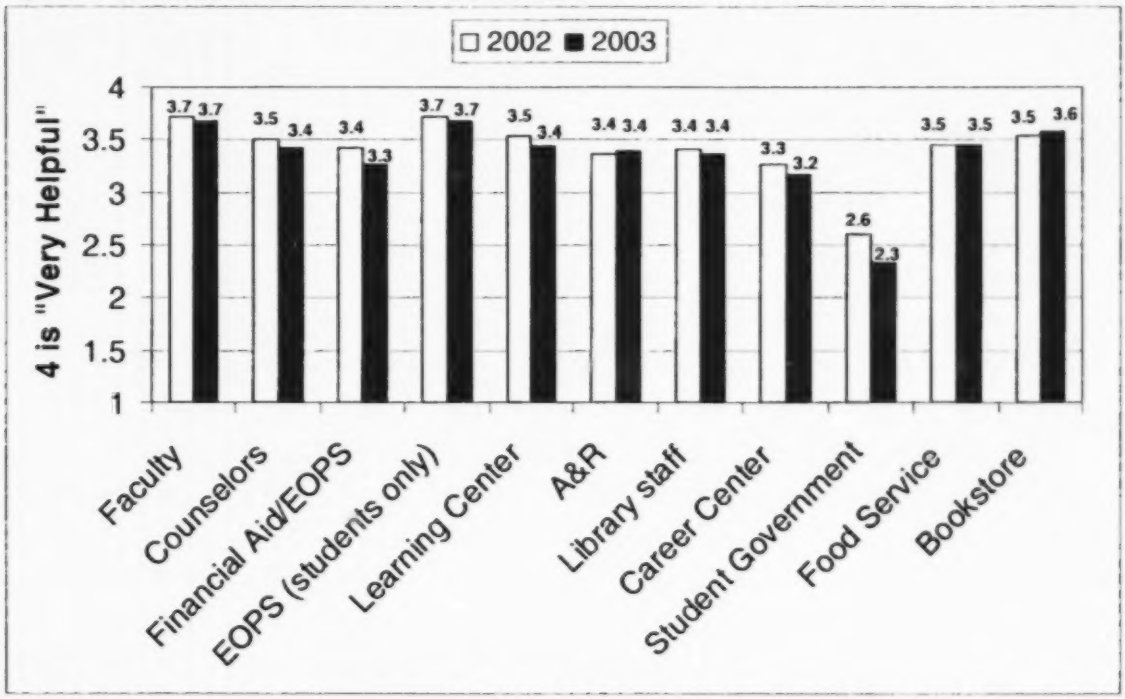
Figure 3. Plans after graduation



Satisfaction

In general, graduating students are very satisfied with the services and education that they received at Mendocino College. Students rated 11 areas as either being "Very helpful" (4); "Somewhat helpful" (3); "A little bit helpful" (2); or "Not at all helpful" (1). The overall average for the class of 2002 was 3.41; for the class of 2003 it was 3.34.

Figure 4. Satisfaction with programs and services



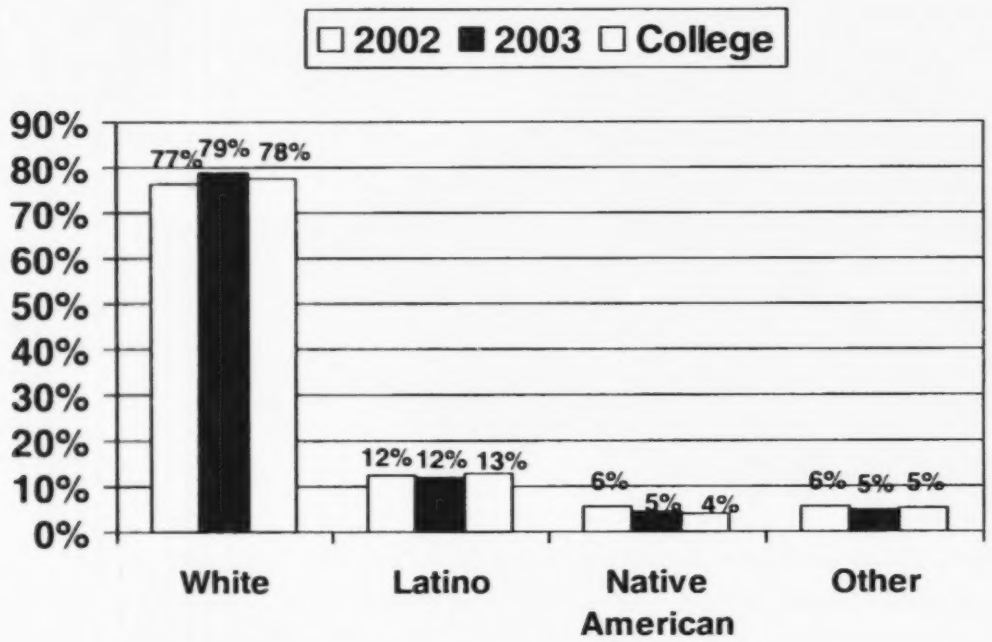
Program / Service	2001-2002			2003-2004	
	Rating	Number of Students rating		Rating	Number of Students rating
Faculty	3.71	80		3.66	68
Counselors	3.51	85		3.43	77
Financial Aid/EOPS	3.42	60		3.27	51
EOPS*	3.71	28		3.67	21
Learning Center	3.53	58		3.41	56
A&R	3.37	86		3.37	76
Library staff	3.40	67		3.37	54
Career Center	3.26	31		3.12	33
Student Government	2.60	20		2.33	18
Food Service	3.45	69		3.42	59
Bookstore	3.53	86		3.56	78

*EOPS students only

Demographics

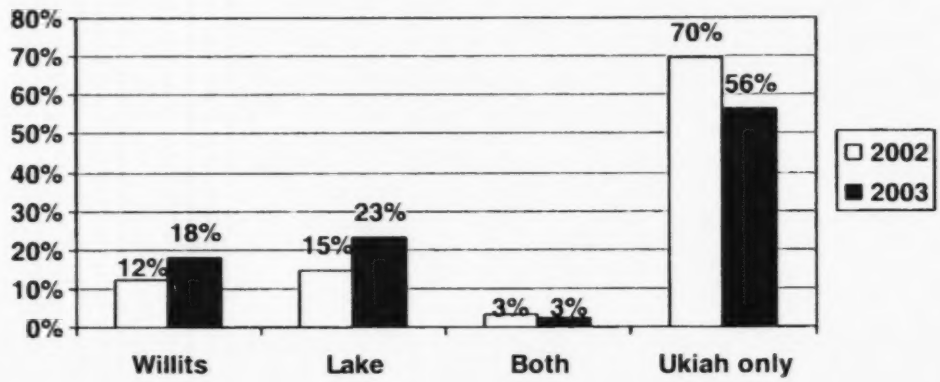
The ethnicity of the college's graduates closely resembles the ethnic composition of the college in general. Females accounted for 66% of the class of 2003, which closely resembles the percentage of females in the college at large (64%).

Figure 5. Ethnicity of graduates



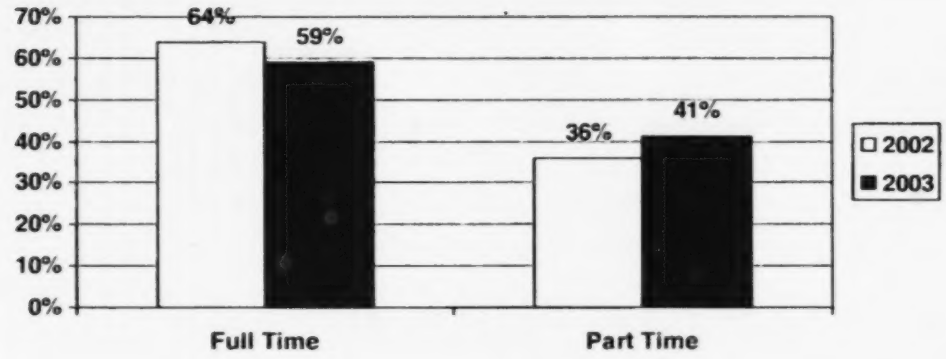
Graduating students were asked if they had ever taken classes at a college center.

Figure 6. Attendance at Lake and Willits Centers



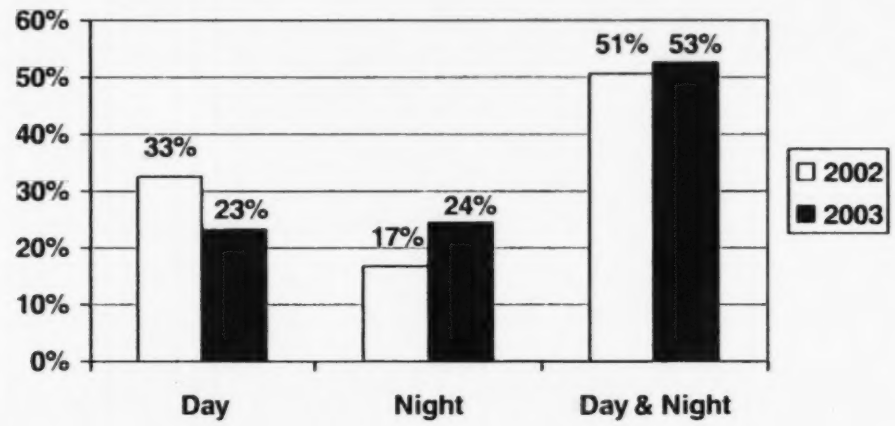
Graduating students indicated if they had attended as Full Time students or as Part Time students

Figure 7. Full Time and Part Time attendance



Students also indicated if they primarily attended classes in the day, at night or both day and night.

Figure 8. Day and Night course taking patterns



Programs and Graduates

General Studies and Liberal Arts account for 57% of the Associate Degree graduates and 48% of all graduates. The most popular certificates were those in the Business areas, business accounting, management and administration. Other popular certificate programs were Business Office Technology, Automotive Technology, Alcohol and Other Drugs and Child Development.

Class of 2003

Area	AA/AS			Class of 2003 - Certificate		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
General Studies	35	58	93	--	--	--
Liberal Arts	28	60	88	--	--	--
Business	17	38	55	4	18	22
Child Development	1	19	20	1	5	6
Psychology	4	14	18	--	--	--
Social Science	5	2	7	--	--	--
Computer Science	6	1	7	2	2	4
Administration of Justice	4	2	6	1	0	1
Business Office Tech.	1	5	6	0	7	7
Biological Science	2	3	5	--	--	--
Health Science	0	3	3	--	--	--
Art/Theater/Dance/Music	0	3	3	1	1	2
English	2	0	2	--	--	--
Alcohol and Other Drugs	1	1	2	4	2	6
Automotive Technology	1	0	1	7	0	7
Humanities	0	1	1	--	--	--
Physical Education	0	1	1	--	--	--
Spanish	0	1	1	--	--	--
Speech	0	1	1	--	--	--
Total	**107**	**213**	**320**	**20**	**35**	**55**

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